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Histoire de la Nation Française. Par GABRIEL HANOTAUX, de l'Académie Française. Tome XII., *Histoire des Lettres*, volume I., *Des Origines à Ronsard.* Par JOSEPH BÉDIER, ALFRED JEAN-ROY, et F. PICAUVET. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie. 1921. Pp. 590.)

M. FRANÇOIS PICAUVET's survey of Latin literature, which opens this new volume of Hanotaux, begins with the writings of the Gallo-Romans of northern Italy, and continues with authors of French birth down to the eighteenth century. Claiming that the "French soul" first expressed itself in Latin, and emphasizing the influence of Latin on literature in French, M. Picavet finds in the works of the Carolingian period a steady growth of French national feeling, and attributes the ideas and many words of the larger part of French literature of the twelfth century to a Latin renaissance, which also carried with it the especial qualities of clarity, precision, and order. It was through translations from Latin that French authors of the thirteenth century gained in flexibility and elegance, while the Renaissance of the fifteenth led them to a correct understanding of the spirit of antiquity.

This outline is followed by a chapter on the *chansons de geste*, by M. Bédier. Affirming quite positively that the earliest known epics, *Roland*, the *Chanson de Guillaume*, and *Gormond et Isembard* started with pious legends that centred around Blaye and the road to the Pyrenees from Blaye, the monastery at Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, and Saint Riquier respectively, M. Bédier sees these legends stimulated by the rising vogue of the pilgrimage to Santiago, often made under armed escort, and broadened by the belief that Charlemagne, whose fame was fostered by his many religious foundations, had once gone that way. Given substance by borrowings from chronicles and epitaphs, they were rhymed toward the middle of the eleventh century, when the monks shared them with the minstrels who entertained the crowds at the various shrines. Thus clerk and singer joined to announce warfare with the infidels as the peculiar mission and glory of France. Before this time the French epic did not exist in any shape. But it had prototypes in medieval Latin, not yet determined.

All manuscripts of the epic except the Oxford *Roland* date from the thirteenth century or later. In numerous instances these manuscripts contain only revisions of earlier originals. They occasionally offer also competing versions of the same poem, a feature probably due to the efforts of associations, formed to exploit the epic, not to infringe on one another's literary rights. Retaining a popular plot they would vary the language. The mass of epic poetry was divided, primitively perhaps, into three sections, or *gestes*. The *geste* of the king presented the theocratic idea, crusades under the leadership of Charlemagne. The second *geste*, of Garin de Monglane, saw this sacred calling pass from Charlemagne's degenerate descendants to a younger family, whose utter devotion to the holy cause strongly contrasted with the indifference of an indolent court.

The third, the *geste* of Doon de Mayence, told of strife among Christians, of the perils of individualism, of the results of pride and "desmesure". Conflicts between feudal fealty and blood ties in this *geste* frequently gave rise to highly dramatic situations.

The remaining kinds of medieval French literature, down to 1547, are discussed by M. Jeanroy in the second half of the volume. Measuring his subject approximately by centuries, and including a chapter on Provençal authors, to whom he assigns the invention of the *nouvelle* while denying any direct contact between them and the French lyrists during the Second Crusade, M. Jeanroy shows a preference for the naturalness of the *roman d'aventure* and its variety of plot, notes the infiltration of Greek novelistic material into Western fiction, and looks to a more correct interpretation of the music of lyric poetry for a better understanding of it.

The thirteenth century, of a realistic trend, began to replace poetry with prose, for greater freedom, and to avoid word-padding in order to fill out lines. Arthurian poetry had been restricted in ideas and was conventional, but the prose *Lancelot* discloses a study of character and a conversational style. The *jeux-partis* of the day still interest by their personal tone; and allegory produced in Jean de Meung, not a subversive spirit, like Voltaire, but the first humanist. Under Philip the Fair social conditions were freely criticized, and the early fourteenth century saw many religious and political treatises. But imagination was lacking and lyric poetry docilely accepted its recently fixed forms. Later, translations and prose fiction were favored, while poetry, personal as well as learned, found a Chartier, who was also the first writer of classical French prose.

In Chartier's day there were patrons of literature, and libraries of richly illuminated manuscripts were being formed. Charles d'Orléans's language was almost modern, and after him came Villon. A surprising development of the liturgical drama characterized the last half of the fifteenth century, and in addition there was comedy that professionals often acted, while outright materialism animated *Pathelin* and the works of La Salle. The reign of Francis I. witnessed the overturnings of the Reformation, a movement that M. Jeanroy tellingly analyzes, and after 1540 idealism returned, with romances like *Amadis*, and poetry after Italian and ancient models. The volume is abundantly illustrated throughout by G. Ripart, and also by René Piot.

F. M. WARREN.

Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History. Edited by Sir PAUL VINOGRADOFF, Corpus Professor of Jurisprudence in the University of Oxford. Volume VI. *Studies in the Hundred Rolls: some Aspects of Thirteenth-Century Administration*, by Helen M. Cam, M.A.; *Proceedings against the Crown, 1216-1377*, by Ludwik Ehrlich, B.Litt., D.Jur. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1921. Pp. x, 198, 274.)

THE two monographs included in the present volume treat from opposite sides the same general constitutional question, namely, the position